

Find Your College Match

Compare colleges to make the best choice

There is no set formula to finding a school that you like and that offers a good fit for your career interests. However, there are some general guidelines you could consider as you choose. Use the outline of steps below as a framework for exploring and comparing schools. Word to the wise: Be thorough in your search. Being methodical now means you're more likely to find a strong match and succeed at the institution you select.

What to do	How to do it
1. Get educated about your options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Browse college and university websites. Many such websites offer virtual campus tours along with complete program descriptions, course catalogs, and much more. Use College Navigator to zero in on schools by institution type, location, and other criteria.• Request materials from schools. Brochures and other publications can provide you more information to narrow your selection.• Refer to online college guides. <i>Peterson's</i>, <i>The Princeton Review</i>, <i>U.S. News and World Report</i> and many other such guides offer college search tools and school rankings by various criteria.• Talk with your high school counselor. Discuss your career interests and ask for suggestions on appropriate schools.• Visit a college fair. Colleges and universities hold college fairs to meet prospective students and answer questions. Find out about upcoming fairs from your high school counselor.• Gather information with peers. Friends can give you valuable insight about what they're experiencing.• Get a mentor. Find an adult recently out of school or senior classman who can provide advice given his or her own college and career journey.

Compare schools to find one or more you like. Below are some suggested criteria to use in your evaluation.

2. Do an apples-to-apples comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program offerings. Does the school offer a program of study in the field you want to enter? How does it rank against the programs of other schools? A good college guide will have this information.• Admissions policy. Does the school accept most students who apply or select students by various criteria, including grades, entrance exam scores, essays, etc.?• Cost. What is the cost to attend the school? You can gather this information from the financial aid area of the school's website.• Location. Is it important for you to go home every so often? A local school makes that easier.
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- **Size.** How many students does the school serve? Studying at a large or small school can make a difference to how you feel on campus.
- **Ratio of faculty to student.** Do you mind large classes or do you prefer the attention that comes with smaller classes and a higher ratio of faculty to students?

3. See it up close

Once you've chosen a few schools, consider visiting campus. A campus visit gives you a world of information you might not get otherwise, including how to navigate campus, where dorms are, what college life is like, and more.

Refer to [Visit Campus Before You Choose](#) for details.

4. Choose your top three

Select more than one school to apply to. That way you're more likely to get accepted by at least one of the schools you like.